THE COMMONWEAL

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LETTING THINGS ALONE

THE issuing of what might be termed a last will and testament in the evening of life by a writer whose words on first and last things have enjoyed a wide circulation is a practice to be heartily commended. A document given the world by a great writer at an age when, for most men, death is feeling out the defenses of life, may not have the worth of complete knowledge. Such knowledge—alas! only comes when knowledge is no longer communicable. But it should at least lock the presses on the author's message. It should, so far as is humanly possible, be definite, categorical—res adjudicata!

The case of Mr. George Bernard Shaw as preacher and social prophet is unique. None of the spontaneous reactions which protect the ordinary being, the automatic gestures which soften the impact of truth, seem to have been vouchsafed him from youth. From his earliest recorded days (and no man is fonder of referring to these as example or warning) he has been a questioner, a seeker, a tester and prober. He is rather like some of those physiologists occasionally to be met with, so obsessed by their anatomical knowledge, that every muscular and nervous reflex in the simplest motions is registered on their consciousness, and registered at the very time they are being made. In other words, Mr. Shaw has become a thinking machine, terrifying alike in its precision and self-consciousness, and all the more formidable because he is never tired of telling his vast audience that no power or insight belongs to him that might not belong to all men and women who would consent to discard the prejudices that becloud their vision and deprive their judgments of any real worth or helpfulness.

It is not our intention to attempt, within the space this section of The Commonweal permits, anything pretending to be a competent review of Mr. Shaw's testament: The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism. The dedication may well be one of those pleasantries which the Anglo-Irish author often uses to lend salt and savor to his sermons, and which the dullard finds so hard to forgive him. His thesis, which is the redistribution of property, root and branch, until poverty in the modern economic (not the evangelical) sense of the word, is a bitter memory, may seem, at first sight, so fantastic that its merits will very probably be excluded from most estimates of the work. What does concern us here, is the fact that the world of which Mr. Shaw draws a picture, in order to convince his hypothetical woman reader of the need for a sweeping change, is a godless and a pagan world, and that, as presented by him, it cannot claim to benefit by any of the homilies which Christianity uses to

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sprinkle cool patience on the heat and flame of the revolutionary distemper.

Rarely (as is his wont) does Mr. Shaw mention any Christian solutions throughout his 470 pages. When he does, it is to dismiss them, not so much because he believes them to be useless or inadequate, as because the society against which his book is a protest, has forestalled him by excluding them itself. "If King Alfred," he says in so many words, "had been told that the time would come in England when one idle family would have five big houses and a steam yacht to live in while hard-working people were living six in a room and half-starving at that, he would have said that God would never allow such things to happen except in a very wicked nation. Well," he proceeds (and his words deserve close attention for they seem to summarize the cryptic attitude to Christianity that puzzles many believers at finding Mr. Shaw so often on the side of the angels but never on the side of dogma) "we have left God out of the question and allowed it to happen, not through wickedness, but through letting things alone and fancying they would let themselves alone."

What is this world (or this nation—for every American woman who reads Mr. Shaw's testamentary volume will find herself taking sharp and deserved exceptions where our own society is concerned) upon whose eventual destination the most heeded of our social prophets is so little in doubt that he compares it to a runaway automobile in a region full of precipices? It is a world where "one-tenth of the English people own nine-tenths of the property," in which machinery "has actually left the poor much worse off than they used to be when there was no machinery at all"—where poverty has so far transgressed the frontier line of destitution that the man who uses evangelical terms to describe it is (always according to Mr. Shaw) committing the unpardonable offense of using one conception to describe another. "Modern poverty is not the poverty that was blessed in the Sermon on the Mount: the objection to it is, not that it makes people unhappy, but that it degrades them." It is a world where ill-gotten gains, often the result of shrewd gambling, cunning and that flair for taking advantage of the necessities of others which Saint Chrysostom (though he is given no credit line by the Dublin dramatist) listed as one of the deadly sins, profit by the respect and enjoy the full protection accorded property when it was the reward of thrift and self-sacrifice. Finally, it is a world where "capitalism has destroyed our belief in any effective power but that of self-interest backed by force."

The picture is dark, and, like most pictures drawn upon the comprehensive scale, probably overloaded with the murkier pigments. But we do not see that a great deal is to be gained by suggesting points where its sombreness can be diluted. Mr. Shaw's arguments from fact do not differ very markedly from those adduced by Mr. Belloc in his book upon the Servile State. Nor, though their conclusions are poles apart, do his discoveries contrast very sharply with those which Mr. Gilbert Chesterton is bringing to light week after week, with a paradoxical good humor that only partially conceals a wounded moral sense. The problem before the Christian thinker who shares Mr. Shaw's "full-sized conscience" is not less but more urgent because he has what Mr. Shaw apparently can find no present use for—a full-sized body of inherited tradition to guide him if he cares to look for it.

Briefly the root of the problem may be stated in saying that the Christian lives in a world under whose outward tolerance of religion, the social implications of religion have seeped away, leaving a fissure between natural activities and supernatural life that is becoming wider and more evident as time passes. The situation might be very well put by calling historical imagination to our aid and visualizing a quite early Christianity, not forced to wait for its recognition by the Roman state until persecution had hardened it in a community of suffering—till despair and material ruin had rendered it acceptable to a stricken generation shut out from hope on every other side, but given full liberty of worship in the Augustan age in exchange for compliance, or at least silence, in the social and political spheres. Presuming the compromise to have been accepted (which is at least doubtful) its result would have been a church free to lift its cross to the sky, but surrounded by the temples, the arenas, the slave markets, the baths and brothels which mocked every protest uttered from its pulpits, and with things flaunting themselves at its doors that Saint Paul forbade his catechumens even to name. The darkness of the catacombs at least saved the infant Church from that!

The world in which we live today differs from the ancient world in this one but all important respect. We have a Christian tradition, and, under God's providence, it is not confined to professing Christians. Writers and thinkers most anxious to disavow it betray its presence in every line they write. We have a Christian conscience for which corporate is not too strong a word. But it is dazzled by the spectacle of material achievement. It is obscured by sophistries which, as men are more and more beginning to see, date from a great apostasy in which religion played only one, though the major, part. Sooner or later, and probably rather sooner than later, seekers after social righteousness (though Mr. Shaw may not be among them) will be forced, we do not say to a compromise but to a sort of clearing house of values. Unbelievers who are honest enough to ascribe the world's unwellness to "leaving God out of the question," must go on being honest and admit that no cure will be much good that excludes the idea of bringing Him in again. And believers, who have grown too used to seeing the Church's economic mission abrogated, must be brought to see that fighting the devil and counting the martyrs, while leaving the world alone, is a very partial conception of Christian duty in a non-Christian world.

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THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEK BY WEEK

THE assassinations in the Belgrade National Assembly reveal the deep-rooted conflict between the peoples who compose the Jugoslavian kingdom. Events there have been steadily mounting to a climax. The two main antagonists have been the Serbs and the Croats. These, like nearly all the elements of the country's population—the Montenegrins, Bosnians, Slovenes and Macedonians—are Slavs. This racial origin is all they have in common whereas their differences are historical, cultural and religious. The government, now controlled by a shaky coalition, is confronted with the task of retaining its power in the face of one of the most deplorable tragedies yet perpetrated in a section reputed a breeding-place of war. Unquestionably King Alexander and those whose patriotic instincts lead them to fight for unity are hampered by the demands of allies and neighbors. Fully cognizant of Mussolini's imperialistic policy, it is not surprising that the Croatian opposition has rallied against the Nettuno treaty which permits Italians to acquire land along the Jugoslavian coast. Its opponents maintain that such wide concessions to Italy would be capitulation, and in addition to exciting internal discord would endanger relations between the two countries. Since the present government is not truly stable and representative, the conclusion that it ought not sign the treaty without a referendum is almost obvious.

ON THE shaping of events in the next few weeks much will depend. Mussolini has always regarded the treaty as a distinct overture of friendship to Belgrade and a rejection will mean renewed Fascist aggressiveness on the eastern Adriatic shore. France, which has brought the weight of her influence as a Jugoslavian ally, is eager for ratification. Peace in the Balkans is naturally a French goal. Further, she is prepared to loan the Belgrade government a sum sufficient to stabilize the currency, but only if she believes the country will remain at peace with its most powerful neighbor. Surrounded on all sides by absolutely governed nations, there is a strong possibility that the king will be forced sooner or later to establish a military dictatorship. Indeed a decided drift toward this idea can be noted in the attitude of some leaders who have declared that the difficulties in forming a cabinet last February indicated that the usual political methods have failed. Whatever eventuates, Mussolini holds the key to the ultimate solution. On him will rest the responsibility of peaceful adjudication.

WE HAVE said so often that the situation in Mexico is not merely the product of a struggle on the part of religion to maintain itself but an amalgam developed out of a vast number of forces in chaos that it sounds like mere repetition to say the same thing now. Nevertheless there is excellent reason for doing so when one finds World's Work opining as follows: "In spite of many and glaring defects, the Calles-Obregon régime has made progress for Mexico. The grip of the landlords has been broken. The grip of the Church has been broken. The formality of appealing for popular support for the government has become something of a habit. The current budget has been balanced, and numerous constructive works are under way." One wonders how an American editor, prosperous under a government which is not without certain defects of its own, can write this kind of pipe-dream.

THE World's Work should know that Mr. Morrow went to Mexico because his predecessor felt that things were in such a bad shape economically and socially that only the highest type of financial expert could do any good. Under Diaz, not only was the budget balanced, but the national debt was being decreased; schools were flourishing; emigration was lessening; liberty, both political and religious, was a recognized human fact; and there was no bloody internal revolution, but rather the promotion of "numerous constructive works." Today an overwhelming negative to all these things is staring us in the face. That negative has been intensified by every day that Calles has been in office. To term all this a series of "defects," offset by the progress involved in throwing off "the grip of the Church" is not merely to evince prejudice but to throw the worst kind of dust into the eyes of American citizens who, sooner or later, must pay for the ruin of Mexico.

ELSEWHERE in this issue there is plenty of information regarding the good time had by the Republicans in Kansas City, and the equally good time had by

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the Democrats in Houston. We desire to add nothing to this beyond a question: have the mere onlookers on either side been enjoying themselves? When one recalls what Mr. Bryan or Colonel Roosevelt or Bob La Follette or even Senator Beveridge (whose oratory tended to become classic) could do to a campaign, the contemporary tepidity is decidedly startling. It may be that folks are not so dead gone on politics as they used to be; but the chances are that most of the old-time excitement was simply a response to evocative leadership. Who dares, nowadays, to talk to a crowd for two hours? Above all, who ventures to discuss anything that is important? President Coolidge is the only living person whose temperature has been affected, in public, by the McNary-Haugen bill, and even he sought relief in print. The statesman who takes prohibition into the national arena and calls it names from a platform will be the wonder of his time. We cannot help agreeing with Mr. William Allen White that the reason for existing political apathy "lies in the lack of powerful and interesting leaders." "Not only are the presidential candidates on the whole colorless men," says Mr. White further, "but the convention is without striking leadership. There is not an epigram in a whole carload of these leaders, and, curiously, no public questions are discussed." The last fact may explain the rest. If one can't talk about a question frankly, one can't risk an epigram; and color without epigrams is about as unimaginable as an advertised cigarette without a slogan.

THOSE of us who have never been presidential candidates find it difficult to put ourselves, mentally, in the place of those who have. We have no comprehension of the state into which a man gets himself when once he has looked the Presidency in the eye, at close quarters, or of the queer things it does to his judgment. He is bewitched; and since the rest of us are not bewitched, we persist in judging his behavior as if he were in full possession of his senses. He seems to us to act irrationally or, at least, not quite as we would act. Nothing cures him except a national convention which nominates somebody else. After that medicine he is restored; one application does it. Meanwhile his course puzzles those comfortable bystanders who, not having the clue to his real mental condition, persist in judging his curious actions by themselves, and in dazedly wondering for what reason he is doing these strange and unaccountable things.

THUS, for instance, that calm, equable, canny and serene statesman, Senator Curtis, astonished those who thought they had known him well for half a century by doing something entirely out of character. As soon as he reached Kansas City, Mr. Curtis, who had never been known to hurt anybody's feelings in public in all his nearly seventy years, emitted a ferocious and savage growl at Mr. Hoover. Take, too, Senator Reed of Missouri. Why he should persist, all by himself, in trying to "stop Smith" after everybody else had quit mystified those who had not the clue. One can understand why the late Mr. Meredith felt it a duty to "stop" the city man; one can understand why Mr. McAdoo wanted to stop the man of Madison Square; one can even understand, with some difficulty, why Senator Walsh wanted for a time to stop the terrible Wet. But Mr. Reed does not hate wets, nor Catholics, nor Tammany men, and he has no Madison Square bruises. Yet of all the Smith-stoppers he, and he alone, persisted to the bitter end, as if he were coping with a "crisis" or performing a great public service. The sting of the presidential bee is not permanent, but while it lasts its victim does queer things. The healing medicament of a convention cured Mr. Curtis overnight; and twenty-four hours of the same treatment will make Mr. Reed his old self again, cheerfully and valorously scalp-hunting after the dastards, caitiffs and varlets of the Republican party.

CANADA has many problems all its own which are aired from time to time in the major press of the country, and whose echoes occasionally come south of the Great Lakes. The reluctance of the British and Nordic immigrant to tempt his fortunes in her very open spaces is one. The preference of those who do for life in the big towns and the mechanical arts generally rather than for the prairie and dirt farming is another. None of them need be considered as insoluble, but it is certain their solution will not be helped by that very undesirable immigrant the Ku Klux Klan which, according to the Canadian correspondent of the London Times, has "suddenly come to life" in Saskatchewan, with kleagles, dragons, fiery crosses and all the horrific apparatus familiar on the front pages of our own illustrated dailies half a decade ago, and happily fading out of very sharp consciousness today.

THE sheer effrontery of an order which has left a trail of corruption and foul dealing, interspersed with prison sentences, major and minor, behind it in the land of its birth, and which is the most thoroughly discredited thing that ever came out of American life, transporting its activities across the border at this hour is calculated to take the breath away. We do not anticipate a very long or a very prosperous career for the hooded cobras in western Canada. The dominion is governed by level-headed men, quite alive to the problems that come from mixed population and divided religious loyalties, and very well instructed as to the comparative merits of dealing with them in broad or narrow-minded fashion. And there is a very efficient body of men, with which every movie fan here is familiar, who have a roving commission to deal adequately with overt acts of lawlessness, and a reputation for sticking to the trail once they start. We predict that the first nightgown party, whipping or tarring bee in which the imported order indulges in Saskatchewan will be its last.

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MORE than once The Commonweal has protested mildly against the fulsome compliments paid to British law by traveled members of American bar associations whenever there has been occasion to find fault with the native article, and has ventured to point out that comparisons, to have any value, should take heed of the different conditions existing on either side of the Atlantic. It is with the more pleasure, therefore, that it renders its tribute to the equitable judgment just given by the Court of King's Bench in London, in a libel suit brought by the Monsignor Leon Durand, bishop of Oran in Algeria, against a very well-known and authoritative review, the Nineteenth Century and After. An article in the January number upon the Vatican and the Action Française by a non-Catholic clergyman, whose interest in the affair strikes us as somewhat officious, had accused Monsignor Durand of misappropriation of public funds, and, largely through the efforts of the editor of the London Tablet, a suit was brought by the injured prelate. The result has proved that the well-known advice to advocates in a bad case to abuse the other side may prove a double-edged weapon. The English court has decided that no ground exists for the slander. The African bishop benefits by a full apology and the charities of his entire diocese benefit by a round sum of money (amount not specified).

TWO observations are in order on this unprecedented case in English law. One, of course, is that the speedy justice which a British court has rendered a foreigner reflects great credit on its sense of fair play. Another is that the result, as the Tablet claims, may possibly open up a new era in the history of anti-Catholic slander by making the practice less safe than it has been in the past. We fear, however, that the Tablet is a little optimistic. If the writer of the article in the Nineteenth Century had not had the foolhardiness to attach his statement to an individual, and had left it as a reflection on the corporate body of the Catholic clergy in Algeria, his libel would have been no less a libel. But we very much doubt whether in that case an action, to use legal phraseology, would have "lain." The inability to sue for corporate redress when some body, religious or otherwise, is promiscuously bespattered, is a hiatus in equity, if not in law. And no informed person will have trouble in naming a sheaf of shady prints which owe the circulation and the immunity they enjoy precisely to that fact.

TO HOW great an extent modern banking has improved upon the methods of an earlier time may be learned from a brief consideration of factors which were hardly known a generation ago. The federal reserve system, rightly viewed as revolutionary when it was inaugurated, has not only maintained the stability of many banking institutions but has taught the value of consolidation to others. Today the drift is visibly toward either branch or "chain" banking, with emphasis upon managerial ability. Similarly, a variety of new offices have been concentrated within the teller's cage. Administration of trust funds, the sale of investment securities, the flotation of bond issues—in short the whole of what is termed financial service—have all been inlaid into the bank's regular business. That new problems are involved and await the best method of solution is quite natural. In reviewing some of these, the American Institute of Banking, which met recently in Philadelphia, properly remained conscious of the fact that profitable enterprise reposes upon the confidence of the public, which trusts the banks as it trusts little else beside the Supreme Court.

HOW many contemporary citizens are profoundly conscious of Hippolyte Taine, whose centenary has been observed this year? But even though he is no longer widely read, his influence upon modern thinking survives and has proved beneficent in many ways. Of Taine's positivism and spiritual myopia not a great deal remains, these having been absorbed into the composite picture one now has of nineteenth-century agnosticism. He speaks to us as a critic of ideologies made eminent by a passion for reality. There is no doubt that many a hypothesis which used to call for enthusiastic support has been undermined by that calm attentiveness to facts which he recommended to his age; and if the modern historian is less lyrical and more anxious to discern what is verifiable, he owes a genuine debt to the man who supplied France with a view of the Revolution for which it did not greatly care. It is, of course, true that society as a whole cares little for his habit of detachment. One may find more than a touch of irony in the circumstance that the official spokesman for the government at the centenary festival was M. Herriot, chief modern representative of modes of thinking which were anathema to Taine himself. More to the point, however, is the truth that men as a whole need nothing so much as sympathetic charity, to which Taine allotted little room in his "prosaic" universe. After all he was constantly looking for law, while the great majority of his fellow-men were asking for mercy; and his famous admission that Christianity was the only power capable of keeping mankind from a return to the beast was one of the greatest tributes to truth ever wrung out by pessimism.

RECENTLY a New York newspaper carried the announcement of a historical work on medicine, The Physician Down the Ages, suggesting that the curve of intellectual activity had its peak about 250 A.D. and its "depression to 1500 A.D. during the dark ages, when the Church suppressed learning, art and freedom of discussion." That was startling enough, considering the fact that probably the subject most written about from the historical, artistic and literary standpoint during the twentieth century has been the middle-ages. Certainly if we count all the books about Dante, the middle-ages must be considered the paramount theme.

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The next morning the metropolitan newspapers contained the news that the New York Academy of Medicine had just paid $185,000 for a collection of medical books, the principal portion of which consisted of some mediaeval manuscripts and eighty-three volumes published before 1501 dealing with various medical subjects. The only conclusion that the ordinary reader can come to after comparing the two items is that the president and the board of trustees of the Academy of Medicine have been wasting the funds of the Academy for worthless volumes that mean absolutely nothing in the history of medicine, since they come to us from the "dark ages."

IT IS now nearly forty years since John Fiske, writing, of all places in the world, in the introduction to his volume, The Beginnings of New England, or the Puritan Theocracy in Its Relations to Civil and Religious Liberty, gave his opinion in no uncertain terms of the people who talk of the middle-ages as "dark": "When we think of all the work big with promise of the future that went on in those centuries, which modern writers in their ignorance used once to set apart and stigmatize as the 'dark ages,' we feel that there is a sense in which the most brilliant achievements of pagan antiquity are dwarfed in comparison with these." In spite of the forty years that have passed, there are still "modern writers in their ignorance" who talk of the "dark ages." It is true that this is the first time in recent years that anyone has talked of the Church as suppressing art during the middle-ages; but then, men "in their ignorance" will say anything, and the more ignorant they are, the louder their assertions are likely to be.

WHERE THE ROAD BEGINS

COLLEGE is the training ground, the barracks, the period of emergence of claims to leadership. Life is the campaign. One thinks of the relationship between the two much as one conceives of the link joining discipline and victorious performance. Ideally, at least, the college can do something for young people which no other agency is able to accomplish. All of us are interested, therefore, in seeing that the real approximates to the ideal as nearly as possible. We want the life of the future to be engineered as efficiently as it can be. Nevertheless there are frequent moments—more frequent, perhaps, than ever before—when the indispensable question of morale presents itself. In what spirit is the acquired technique of living to be applied? What motives govern the young corporals and captains who go out erect from the drill field?

That an individualism not remote from selfishness is manifest everywhere need hardly be stated. It is a state of mind which, to some extent at least, must be considered an inevitable consequence of the vast popular hegira to the campus. Thousands of boys and girls anxious to "know better and do better than their fathers" necessarily expected that graduation would bring to them ideas different from what they had absorbed at the parental table and a "job" having both the glamour of novelty and the glitter of success. It is evident, however, that the best among their educators greatly doubt the ability of academia to produce these effects, and even the desirability of trying to produce them. Commencement season always gives collegiate leaders a chance to "shadow forth" what is on their minds. The address to the graduate is now a very real barometer and can be scrutinized with interest.

This year there has been a noticeable emphasis upon "moral earnestness," reflecting an unmistakable tendency in youth itself. Catholic and Protestant educators alike drove home this point with vigor in many places. So excellent an address as that delivered by the Reverend John A. Ryan to the graduates of Trinity College, Washington, ought to be reprinted and placed in the hands of many a freshman next fall. It would supply them with something to work toward and for, as Lancelot journeyed on his quest. In a similar spirit, Bishop Charles Fiske, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, reminded Cornell of the following truths: "Man may learn much by scientific investigation, but one thing science cannot do for him: it is powerless to give him guidance for life. No knowledge can take the place of spiritual certainty."

It may not have been altogether a coincidence that the presidents of three major eastern universities—Harvard, Yale and Princeton—made conscience the theme of their discourses. That which Gerson upbraided during the fourteenth century as "self-love" was also stigmatized in these modern addresses. Indeed, President Lowell's words might have issued from the mouth of some mediaeval humanist appalled at the selfishness of those "too proud to dine with the grammarians." At Yale and Princeton the appeal to Christianity was more marked. "The call of the world of human need," said President Hibben, "comes to us all in a sense more or less compelling, but to some again it determines the career of the man. We have this illustrated in its most striking example, the mission of Christ, who came into the world 'not to be ministered unto but to minister,' and who had ever 'compassion upon the multitude.' "

May one hope that these evidences of serious reflection upon the major problems of life indicate the existence of remedial desire? Shall we as a people escape, through our young men, from the kind of moral Cannae which seems to have settled upon us during years of frenzied excitement and lavish earnings? That there should be levity, scepticism and even inactivity in academia is one fact, which history teaches us to take not too catastrophically. But to hope, on the other hand, for the compensatory facts of an enthusiastic dedication of hands and hearts to God and man, of a resolute triumph over avarice and dishonesty, is almost equivalent to reaching the conviction that life is worth the living.

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THE ELEPHANT SHIVERS

By W. C. MURPHY, JR.

"THE western farmers always raise hell between elections but they vote Republican in November; they don't know how to do anything else." Such was the interpretation of the political phase of the farm problem expressed by one of the most widely known political writers in America during the hectic days when the Republicans at Kansas City were framing their platform for the current campaign. The statements of many delegates and party leaders were to the same effect, though less emphatically phrased. Out of it all comes the conclusion that the Republicans hold Smith's nomination to be a certainty, that they consider him the strongest candidate the Democrats could put up, and that if the farm states of the Middle-West and particularly of the Northwest do not stand firm the Republican candidate cannot be elected.

Moreover, the results of the convention demonstrated that the Republicans are willing to gamble on the strength of the farmers' traditional Republicanism rather than to allow the control of the party to pass from the industrial to the agricultural element. From the time the President vetoed the McNary-Haugen bill it was apparent that the administration could not support any of the candidates who were pledged to that bill. So the problem of the administration leaders simmered down to a choice of trying to draft Mr. Coolidge, throwing support to some dark horse candidate with the idea of deadlocking the convention until the Hoover movement disintegrated, or accepting Mr. Hoover.

This situation led to a condition of tenseness in the days when Kansas City was awaiting the arrival of the Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts delegations, a tenseness that has seldom been approximated in pre-convention maneuvering. In some ways this was a most peculiar convention. For one thing the climax came before the convention was ever called to order; namely, on the morning set for the opening session when it became known that Massachusetts and Pennsylvania would support Hoover. Later in the same day New York also declared for Hoover and from that time forward the convention, so far as the nomination of a presidential candidate was concerned, was a rubber-stamp affair with smaller delegations falling over one another in an effort to obtain reserved seats on the bandwagon. This gave the final result an appearance of Hoover strength which was not actually present and that fact has an important bearing on any consideration of eventualities in November.

In Mr. Hoover's total of 837 votes there were many that *were not* enthusiastic. Furthermore, when Senator Moses, the permanent chairman of the convention, put the question on making the nomination unanimous, though he was quite accurate in announcing that "the ayes have it and the motion is agreed to and the nomination is made unanimous," the "ayes" did not have it unanimously; not by several state delegations.

Of course, the nomination of Mr. Hoover coupled with the failure of the convention to endorse a farm relief plank favoring the McNary-Haugenites, produced considerable speculation as to the likelihood of the appearance of a third party in the field this fall. While no such movement has so far developed to the point where it may be predicted with safety, there is evidence enough to justify the statement that such a development would not be surprising.

Whether or not there will be a third party depends to a large extent upon what the Democrats do at Houston. Leaders of the northwestern Progressive section of the Republican party are unanimous in saying that their constituents would prefer to support a Democrat running on a platform containing a satisfactory farm relief plank rather than indulge in a third party movement which, admittedly, would have no chance of electing its candidate for the Presidency.

In any event the farm relief element is going to wait until the Democrats have framed their platform at Houston and until the Democratic candidate has had an opportunity to declare his position on this issue. The farm leaders will tell one that the Democrats are bound to take advantage of the "Republican mistake" on farm relief. The same leaders, all assuming that Governor Smith will be selected at Houston, also call attention to the fact that the New York City delegation in the House of Representatives and the two New York Senators have been consistent supporters of farm relief measures during the past few years. Upon that record they base a prediction that Governor Smith will, take a "satisfactory" stand on this issue.

It is this line of reasoning that causes some apprehension among the conservative element in the Republican ranks. The latter acquiesce in estimates of electoral votes which, without including any of the Progressive states of the Northwest, put Governor Smith within fifteen or twenty votes of election. Then they begin to figure by individual states. Montana has two Democratic Senators, one of whom is a Catholic, and that state has voted wet on a recent referendum; hence it is practically conceded to Smith. The two Wisconsin Senators, both Republicans, are inclined to believe that no Republican except Senator Norris of Nebraska can carry that state against Governor Smith. Since Senator Norris is not the Republican candidate, the only opportunity he would have to carry Wisconsin against Smith would be at the head of an independent ticket and in such an event it would be a case of "heads I win, tails you lose" for the Republican organization.

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All four of the Senators from North and South Dakota are exceedingly dubious about Mr. Hoover's ability to carry those states against Smith, although saying that a Progressive Republican would undoubtedly carry both states. Of course, from Governor Smith's viewpoint it would be most helpful if he could carry these northwestern states himself; but it would be just half as helpful if some independent candidate were to take them away from the Republican candidate.

While, at first thought, it borders on the chimerical to suggest that the Democrats might carry Wisconsin, or either of the two Dakotas, those who watched and talked to the farm state delegations at Kansas City are more inclined to put credence in the seriousness of the farm revolt than most of these observers were a few weeks ago. Of course there was considerable hokum in the farmer's demonstration here—when a group of several hundred overall-clad men tried to march through the convention hall in protest against the then impending nomination of Hoover and were ejected by the Kansas City police. A Kansas City newspaperman who stood on a corner and watched the parade pass counted five real estate salesmen in overalls and there is reason to believe that there were others in the parade who carried the farm banners with the same enthusiasm as, on other occasions, they might display as sandwich men advertising the merits of a particular brand of soap or the attractions of an armchair lunchroom. But there were many real farmers in the parade and their monotonous chant, "We won't vote for Hoover," carried an ominous ring. Somewhat disturbing also were some of the banners they carried: "We want an American for President," and "If we don't get it here, we're going to Houston."

A representative of one of the Kansas City newspapers a few months ago made a motor trip of more than four thousand miles through the prairie farming regions with instructions to talk to no one but actual farmers and to ascertain their attitude on political questions. This man who, before he made the trip, had been inclined to ascribe the farm revolt to the imaginations of paid farm lobbyists, is firmly convinced that the farmers are in a frame of mind to put farm relief ahead of allegiance to the Republican party.

Not the least irritating of the sore spots left over from the convention is that caused by the message sent to the convention by former Governor Lowden of Illinois in authorizing the withdrawal of his name:

> I have stated publicly that I did not want the nomination unless the Republican party was prepared to meet fully and fairly the agricultural problem. . . . This, in my judgment, the convention by its platform just adopted has failed to do. I therefore authorize the withdrawal of my name from the floor of the convention. Though I cease to be a candidate my interest in the cause is in no way abated.

There has been considerable speculation as to whether the "cause" to which Mr. Lowden referred is Republicanism or farm relief.

Then there was the incident in the all-night closed session of the resolutions committee while the platform was being put into its final shape. While the committee was going over that section of the platform enumerating the many blessings which the Republicans assert they have conferred upon the farmer, a northwestern Senator, who is not particularly radical, remarked: "But there is another very important law which the Republicans have enacted for the benefit of the farmer, the federal bankruptcy act."

That there is a real fear of Governor Smith's vote-getting ability was demonstrated by the frantic maneuverings to select a vice-presidential candidate. The leaders in control were confronted with the choice of a candidate to neutralize the agricultural opposition to Mr. Hoover or a candidate who might draw from Smith's strength in the eastern states. For a time there was a considerable movement for Senator Edge of New Jersey—even after the convention had endorsed the platform containing a declaration in favor of enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment to which Senator Edge is opposed. It was argued that Edge might possibly swing New Jersey away from Smith. Then came the movement to nominate former Governor Channing Cox of Massachusetts in the hope that he could stem the Smith-Walsh combination in that state. Probably an accurate summary of the reasons for the nomination of Senator Curtis of Kansas was that given this writer by a member of the national committee who had just succeeded in lining up his delegation for the Kansas Senator.

"If Hoover can't carry the East against Smith," he said, "there is no candidate for the Vice-Presidency who can. We'd better make sure of the West if we can."

There were some at the convention who saw a bid for dry support in the adoption of the plank naming the Eighteenth Amendment and calling for its enforcement. But of course there is no essential difference between declaring for enforcement of the constitution as a whole, as has been done in previous platforms, and in singling out a particular part of that constitution for special mention. In fact, as one delegate remarked, "Why not endorse the Ten Commandments?" Moreover, this Republican platform, like all Republican platforms from time immemorial, contained a plank deploring the non-enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and advocating a federal anti-lynching act.

It must be remembered, of course, that the elephant is traditionally a timorous animal. There have been occasions in the past when the Republicans have left their national conventions in a gloomy frame of mind brought on by visions of Democratic success in November. On most of those occasions their gloomy prognostications proved to be unjustified. It is a difficult thing to overturn a normal majority of about five million votes and it can be done only when the opposition is both united and enthusiastic.

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ALFRED E. SMITH: FIGHTER AND LEADER

By JULIAN HARRIS

THE speeches and state papers of Alfred E. Smith have been published under a title which accurately describes the political spirit of New York's great governor—Progressive Democracy.* They reveal Governor Smith's statesmanship and his amazing political courage. They prove him a born leader—a fighting leader, aroused when confronted by trickery or injustice, yet never failing to marshal the facts in such fashion that he brings discomfiture to his opponents and puts to flight his assailants. He is at his best when he is face to face with the people, and despite, or because of, his simple language and homely references, even in printed form his words glow with the eloquence that is inspired by honesty and fearlessness. But if he speaks in simple phrases, his mind acts with lightning rapidity, whether to dart as an eagle on the "cooing dove" confession of a Mills or to bare the odium of a "deliver-the-goods" boast of a young Roosevelt.

Governor Smith's consistent and continuous fight for personal, religious and civil liberty echoes in many of his speeches and state documents. His refusal to permit the New York legislature to outlaw revolutionary radicalism by methods which violated fundamental rights guaranteed the individual in a democracy, is at one with his approval of the repeal of the New York law which duplicated the object of the Eighteenth Amendment. In his analysis of the rights of the individual and the rights of the state under the federal constitution, Governor Smith is unassailable. His views are precisely the views held by the South until the vexing prohibition problem led the Democrats in this section to surrender undefended the rights for which their forefathers gladly and gallantly died.

There are many Southerners who think that they will vote for the Republican nominee in preference to Governor Smith. It would be well if they could read Governor Smith's address on the difference between the Republican and Democratic parties in New York. The clarity of his statements is an achievement, and his complete understanding of the meaning of Democracy cannot be challenged. And Governor Smith is not only a great Democrat but a loyal American in the truest sense of the word.

A notable quality in Governor Smith's address is his ability to rid a question of bunk and to state it in terms understandable to the man in the street. In a talk to the New York Merchants' Association two years ago he gave his audience facts and figures relating to his administration of the affairs of the state of New York, and referred to the "economy" slogan popularized by the Coolidge administration. Governor Smith debunked the Washington "economy" claims with this statement:

> We have talk about economy in Washington, but the difference between Washington and the states is that Washington has been moving down from a war basis to a peace basis. It does not cost as much to run the government in times of peace as in war. On the other hand, all the states that were patriotically following the request of the federal government during the war by refraining from carrying on any activities they could allow to wait have been going in the other direction, and consequently the cost of government has got to go up until they catch up to where they lost out during the period of the war.

But the foregoing does not mean that Governor Smith believes a state should be extravagant in its expenditures, for in 1925—during just one year—he prevented a Republican legislature from getting away with $10,827,781.04 in pork-barrel bills which it passed and which he vetoed.

In 1924 in a statement to the New York Times, Governor Smith asserted:

> We must cleanse the national administration from the filth of corruption. No guilty man must escape punishment. . . . Our government rests on party responsibility. The high privilege to serve and govern the nation cannot rightfully be claimed by a party whose defense is that only a part of the cabinet was dishonest. . . . The President and the unsmirched residue of his Cabinet as party leaders must bear the blame for the weakness of their party policy.

And as a genuine Democrat he sees that local self-government is essential as a foundation of our republic—that

> New York cannot impose local rules for Oklahoma, nor Montana for Florida. Reasonable differences of viewpoint in widely differing sections must be recognized if we are to preserve national unity. . . .
>
> We must, therefore, revitalize the constitutional provision that powers not expressly given to the federal government are reserved to the states. We must stop the dangerous over-centralization of federal power. We must halt the march of federal commissions and bureaus, and taxation and laws that are pressing on every locality. We must be not only for one but for all.

Four years later—in 1928—Walter F. George, junior Senator from Georgia, made a speech in which he used almost the identical words of Governor Smith. The South cheered Senator George, because he preached, as did Governor Smith, good Democratic doctrine. Later it will cheer Governor Smith.

Yet one may be a Democrat and not necessarily be presidential timber—he may lack a wide knowledge of many essential problems. Fortunately, this does not apply to Governor Smith, as the Democrats of the

**Progressive Democracy, edited by Henry Moskowitz. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.00.*

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East know and the Democrats of the South and West will soon learn. But what of farming? What contact can a governor of a Wall Street state have with the farmer? To begin with:

> 800,000 New Yorkers live on farms and employ a capital, in farms and equipment, of approximately $2,000,000,000. Two-thirds of the area of the state is in farm lands. [And while] New York, among the other states, is only twenty-ninth in total area, and twentieth in area of land in farms, it stands eighth in total of agricultural production. It is first in the production of potatoes, hay, sweet corn and many other vegetables. It is second in dairy products, apples, grapes and total value of all vegetables.

So Governor Smith knows that the farmer has problems—more, he has tried to help the farmer solve them. In a speech made in 1928 he stated that in the same year he recommended the sum of $2,159,730 for agricultural schools, including the experimental station. And in 1928 he points out that, while in 1918 there were only seventeen active coöperative associations, ten years later there were 1,100 active associations doing a business totaling more than $115,000,000. And in five years the state expended more than $20,000,000 for the suppression of bovine tuberculosis.

But there are other problems which have their national counterpart—canalization, water-power, hospitals, parks and playgrounds. With these also Governor Smith has had wide experience, and in his every message and every speech relating to these questions he takes an advanced stand, and displays an understanding of realities, whether in protecting the people or conserving the state's resources. Through it all sounds a note of unyielding determination that the man of small means and little opportunity shall not be crushed under the heel of power and wealth, nor shall the state be stripped of its sovereignty.

At every turn in all that Dr. Moskowitz has gathered in his fascinating volume, one is made aware that three characteristics are outstanding in Governor Smith—knowledge of the subject he discusses, an ability to suggest a remedy, and the magnificent courage to meet every issue and to attempt to force a solution in keeping with decency, honesty and Democracy. It was in this spirit that Governor Smith met the challenge of the Republican legislature which repealed the Mullan-Gage law relating to the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquor in the state of New York; it was in this spirit that Governor Smith proved by the record that Hearst had libeled him, and then read the New York publisher out of the company of fair and honest-minded men; it was in this same spirit that Governor Smith defied Tammany and rejected political association with Hearst when the attempt was made to place them both on the same ticket.

Perhaps it is well to refer specifically to some of the reasons Governor Smith gave for approving the repeal of New York's prohibition law—they are sound reasons, Democratic to the core, and bulwarked by the opinion of the highest judicial authority in the land, the Supreme Court of the United States. After mentioning the favorable referendum in New York on light wines and beer, Governor Smith quotes the following dictum of the Supreme Court of the United States:

> The power confided to Congress by the Eighteenth Amendment is in no wise dependent upon or affected by action or inaction on the part of the several states or any of them.

Governor Smith adds:

> The mere omission to maintain a state statute in no way abrogates a federal statute. It seems to me that this effectually disposes of the loose talk about the nullification of the constitution by refusal on the part of any of the states to enact separate statutes.

And he again quotes the authority of the Supreme Court:

> The constitution, laws and treaties of the United States are as much a part of the law of every state as its own local laws and constitution.

With this logical view Governor Smith is naturally in agreement, and he comments that before the repeal of the Mullan-Gage law the police could take an offender to the state court or the federal court, or to both—double jeopardy. Governor Smith continues:

> After the repeal of the Mullan-Gage law the prosecution must be where it belongs—in the federal court. In law and in fact there is no more lawlessness in repealing the Mullan-Gage law than there is in the failure of the state to pass statutes making it a state crime to violate any other penal statute. . . . To any student of our government I think it must be apparent that one of the great elements in the strength of our democracy is the supremacy of the federal government in its own sphere and the sovereignty of the several states in theirs.

If you will substitute for the Eighteenth Amendment the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the proposed Federal Child Labor law, and the Federal Anti-Lynching law, to the passage of which the just-adjourned Republican convention pledged its party, you will find the bone-dryest Southerner agreeing vociferously with Governor Smith. But the Eighteenth Amendment—it is not a law, it is a commandment.

If the measure of the man is represented by his acts, then Governor Alfred E. Smith is Democracy incarnate. In practically his every message and his every speech there is a rare, rich vein of human sympathy, which runs side by side with his sense of logic and his desire to be fair. No enemy of the people is powerful enough to drive him from the attack, no cause too weak, if based on justice, to win his championship. In his vision he is a statesman and in his knowledge of men a politician without a peer. If Democracy wants a Democrat to lead it, Governor Smith is its logical choice. For his career, his courage and his character combine to set him apart as a leader, who can and will lead—a fighter who can and will fight.

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THE DAYBREAK OF LIBERTY

By GEORGE BARTON

MOST of us are familiar with the proceedings in Congress which led up to the adoption of the great charter of our liberties, but not so many are aware that that document was first proclaimed to the citizens of Philadelphia from the balcony of an observatory attached to the building which occupied the site of what is now the home of the American Philosophical Society. It was but a stone's throw from the ancient Hall where the Declaration was adopted, and made an advantageous forum from which to address the crowd that was gathered in the old square.

We speak today of the Declaration as "the message that was heard round the world," but of course there were sections of the country where the news did not penetrate for weeks. Philadelphians knew that fifty or more earnest men in powdered wigs and knee breeches were considering the advisability of throwing off allegiance to King George and the British Crown, but even when the momentous decision had been reached not all of the people of Penn's "greene towne" grasped its full significance.

Hence came about that first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. It is interesting to note that, although only a century and a half have elapsed, we have already had controversies concerning the place in which it was read, the name of the orator who first proclaimed its sonorous phrases and the circumstances attending the notable event. But we know definitely that it occurred in the State House yard on July 8, and that Colonel John Nixon was the elocutionist.

We have it on pretty good authority that it was comparatively quiet around the State House on the day the Declaration was adopted. Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer assures us that no boy shouted to a grey-haired man in the steeple, "Ring, grandpa, ring!" That, he says, is a story out of the fecund fancy of George Lippard, a popular Philadelphia novelist of the middle of the nineteenth century. An extract from the minutes of the Committee of Safety reads:

> Ordered: That the Sheriff of Philadelphia read or caused to be read and proclaimed at the State House in the city of Philadelphia, on Monday, the eighth day of July, at twelve o'clock noon of the same day, the Declaration of the Representatives of the United States of America, and that he cause all his officers and constables of the said city to attend the reading thereof.
>
> Resolved that every member of this Committee in or near the city be ordered to meet at the Committee Chamber before twelve o'clock on Monday to proceed to the State House, where the Declaration of Independence is to be proclaimed.

The Committee of Inspection of the City and Liberties were requested to attend the affair. Curiously enough the newspapers of the day do not specify the name of the reader, but Colonel John Nixon was a close friend of the Sheriff of Philadelphia at the time and there is no doubt that he performed the function. In two early histories it was stated that Commodore Hopkins had read the document. Another gave the honor to Captain Hopkins, his son. Samuel Hazard, a careful historian who instituted inquiries in the matter, accounts for the Hopkins tradition thus:

> Probably when the Declaration of Independence was printed, groups gathered in shops, public houses and private parlors to hear it read. Commodore Hopkins may have read it to one such group, and Captain Hopkins to another, and in subsequent years someone then present may have stated that he heard the Declaration read by the Commodore or the Captain without explaining where; and the hearer, supposing that it must have been from the balcony of Independence Hall, reported accordingly, thus originating a story in part, though unintentionally untrue, which ultimately found its way in print in the form in which it there appears. Traditions are as gloriously uncertain as the law, and often give the historian quite as much trouble in his dealings with them.

The same authorities assure us that the Declaration was read from the balcony or platform of the observatory, the popular rostrum of the day, by John Nixon, and in such a clear, resonant voice that it was heard on the other side of Fifth Street. Colonel Nixon, who came of Irish stock, was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania. He had been an ardent and most efficient friend of America in the Revolutionary struggle. For a time he was an Alderman in Philadelphia and he commanded a regiment on Long Island and at Valley Forge.

A great crowd had assembled as he ascended the rough platform facing Independence Square. The reading was received with much enthusiasm, the bells in the churches chimed in unison with the one in the State House steeple, bonfires furnished illumination in the evening, and all in all it was a memorable day in the history of the City of Brotherly Love.

Deborah Logan, who lived in the Norris mansion at the corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets, says she heard the reading distinctly. "The bells rang all day and almost all night," wrote John Adams in his diary, "and even the chimers chimed away." This remark was a sly allusion to certain members of Christ Church, who were suspected of being luke-warm to the cause of liberty, even when they were not accused of open devotion to Toryism. Indeed there were many persons in the city—especially in the so-called upper classes—who were very much chagrined at the turn of affairs. Some of them did not attempt to disguise their feeling. Deborah Logan, for example, hastens to add: "The first audience of the Declaration of Independence was

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neither very numerous or composed of the most respectable class of citizens." Charles Biddle in his autobiography says: "I was present in the old State House yard on that memorable Fourth of July. There were very few respectable people present." Like Mrs. Logan he evidently had reference to persons of wealth, family and social position.

But it would be a mistake to take the statements of Mrs. Logan and Mr. Biddle too seriously. Frothingham tells us that the welcome extended to the Declaration in Philadelphia and elsewhere was enthusiastic:

> The formal proclamation was made a holiday occasion at every point of public assemblage. The newspapers of the day teem with accounts of these celebrations, yet in all the chief features each one was like all the rest. The civil authorities were present, the military paraded, bearing the standard of the United States. The salutes were often by thirteen divisions. The population gathered as on gala days. The Declaration was read amid the acclamations of the people, mingled with the roll of drums and the roar of cannon. Then followed the feast and the toasts, and in the evening bonfires and illuminations, with the removing or destruction of the emblems of royalty.

"The Declaration," says old Sam Adams, "was received with wild rejoicing as though it were a decree promulgated from heaven."

There was some feeling over the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Loyalists. In some parts of the city the patriots expressed their resentment in forcible fashion. Men and women who had previously shown their feeling by riding royalist sympathizers through the town in carts, did not hesitate to show what was called "their lack of breeding" on this unusual occasion. "A Loyalist," said one of the patriots, "is a thing whose head is in England and whose body is in America, and its neck ought to be stretched."

John Adams writes:

> You will see by this post that the river is past and the bridge cut away. The Declaration was yesterday published and proclaimed from that awful stage in the State House yard. By whom, do you think? By the Committee of Safety, the Committee of Inspection and a great crowd of people. Three cheers rended the welkin! The batallions paraded on the common and gave us the Feu de Joie, notwithstanding the scarcity of powder. We never can again be happy under a particle of British power. Indeed, this sentiment is very universal. The arms are taken down from every public place. In the evening our late king's coat of arms was brought from the hall in the State House where the said king's courts were formerly held, and burned amid the acclamation of a crowd of spectators!

That all of this was in keeping with the sentiments of the rather formal John Adams was proven by a letter he had previously written to his wife:

> The day will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parades, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other from this time forward, forever more. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not—I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these states. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means.

Colonel Seymour in a letter to Trumbull tells how the news of the Declaration was received in New York City:

> The same evening July 9—the equestrian statue of George III which Tory pride and folly raised in the year 1770, was by the sons of freedom laid prostrate in the dust, the just desert of an ungrateful tyrant! The lead wherewith this monument was made is to be run into bullets, to assimilate with the brain of our infatuated adversaries, who to gain a peppercorn have lost an empire.

This last sentence was in reference to Lord Clare's speech in the House of Commons, that a peppercorn in acknowledgment of Britain's right to tax America, was of more importance than millions without it.

John Nixon read the Declaration from a printed broadside, a number of which had been issued to inform the people of what had taken place on that momentous first Fourth of July. The Nixon copy was handed down in his family and presently fell into the hands of Mrs. Ellen W. Harrison, the wife of the distinguished head of the University of Pennsylvania. She had it framed and placed in the museum of colonial relics in Independence Hall. Another copy deposited with the Pennsylvania Historical Society is endorsed: "Found among the papers of John Nixon, of Philadelphia, and supposed to be the original from which he read the Declaration in public."

This brief summary of the events surrounding the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence may well close with this pen picture taken from the diary of Christopher Marshall:

> July 8, 1776.
>
> Warm sunshine morning. At eleven went and met Committee of Inspection at Philosophical Hall; went from there in a body to the lodge; joined the Committee of Safety; went in a body to the State House yard, where, in the presence of a great concourse of people, the Declaration of Independence was read by John Nixon. The company declared their approbation by three repeated huzzas. The king's arms were taken down in the Court Room, State House, same time. From there some of us went to B. Armitage's tavern; stayed till one. I went and dined at Paul Fook's; lay down there after dinner till five. Then he and the French engineer went with me on the Commons, where the same was proclaimed at each of the five batallions. Fine, starlight, pleasant evening. There were bonfires, ringing bells, with other great demonstrations of joy upon the unanimity and agreement of the declaration.

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TONE POEM

By MARIE GALLAGHER

THE gardenia slowly raised one petal delicately and listened. The very famous Sebastian Nicholas turned and looked at her.

"Would you like to dance?" he asked politely.

"I haven't any feet," murmured the gardenia sadly.

But Sebastian Nicholas was extremely courteous, and he went to the beautifully tapestried couch under the bay window and drew from under it a small box. He opened the box and took out a tiny pair of green slippers.

"Oh! How lovely!" exclaimed the gardenia.

Sebastian held them out to her, but as she looked down on herself she sighed disappointedly.

"I can't wear them," she deplored, "for I've only a stalk."

Sebastian raised her gently out of the water and tore the slim green stalk carefully up the center. Then he put a slipper on each half and placed the gardenia on the couch. But the moment he withdrew his hands, she almost fell over.

"You must go back!" cried Sebastian solicitously, holding out his hands to her.

"No, no, no," pleaded the gardenia. "I'm tired of the water and besides, my two slippers will get wet."

Overcome by these arguments, Sebastian left her and went to his piano.

"I think I had better dance on the floor," suggested the gardenia, as he was looking over his music.

"Why?" asked Sebastian, turning to her in surprise.

"I might spoil the couch-cover if I dance on it with the slippers."

"Those are not ordinary slippers," returned Sebastian offended. "No one has ever worn them but yourself, and they have never yet touched the floor."

The gardenia looked at them with new interest.

"Why, they're just like me, aren't they?" she murmured, and bent over them tenderly.

Sebastian raised his hands over the piano and the next moment they dropped softly on the keys and a sorrowful, soft waltz glided across the room.

The gardenia swayed this way and that way to the rhythm, and sometimes she bowed her white, heavy head until it almost touched the two green slippers. At last the waltz ceased, and Sebastian came over and looked at her. When he saw the moisture, like silver dew, on her petals, he picked her up decisively.

"You're going back in the glass of water," he said.

"No, no, no," she protested in a sweet, muffled voice. "I'm not going back when I'm so happy."

"Oh, very well," rejoined Sebastian petulantly, not even trying to resist that sweet voice.

He returned to the piano and played a dainty forlana. The gardenia's white petals folded out gaily and she ran from one end of the couch to the other, stopping now and then to raise one frail green leg and kick it, after which it drooped down, exhausted.

And then Sebastian, without pausing to consider what pleased her and what not, went playing right into a wild-sounding cardis.

"Please stop!" cried the gardenia. "I could never dance to that," but then, as Sebastian paid no heed to her, she asked:

"Don't you know any more of the others?"

Sebastian started up in amazement at her impertinence.

"I never change from one piece to another because of lack of knowledge," he said haughtily. And he turned his back to her and would not play any more.

The gardenia looked at him a moment and then, sliding down the twelve inches of the couch's height, ran toward the piano. She stood looking up at it and her green feet moved restlessly.

"Would you mind lifting me up to the piano?" she asked in a cool little voice.

Sebastian took her coldly but gently, and placed her on the narrow wooden ledge overlooking the keys. Then he went to the couch and took up a book and bowed his head over it as though he were reading.

The gardenia put one foot forward and tapped timidly on the last ivory key with her green slipper. A frail, far-away little tinkle answered the tap of the green slipper and enchanted the gardenia. She ventured to step on that key and tap the next one and delighted with that, she walked down the entire fifty-two white keys, keeping a cautious eye on the black ones which she had not dared to touch. But when she did touch one, accidentally, and found it a slight mocking variation of the white key, she set aside all her prejudice against black and stepped on all impartially.

Up and down the piano she danced, and Sebastian sat with his head in his hands, listening to that music her feet were making. But after a while, the music grew softer and sadder, and finally it ceased altogether, and when Sebastian went over to the piano, the gardenia was lying with her heavy white head resting against the black keys, and her tiny green slippers had fallen off and one was on C and one was on C sharp. And there were two small brown spots on her where Death's hands had taken hold of her, not half so tenderly as Sebastian's.

And not long after that, everyone was going to the world's concert halls and hearing the famous Sebastian Nicholas's beautiful Tone Poem of a Gardenia.

Interlude

Into the silence of a broken house
You bring your laughter, and your merry singing
Startles the shadows, reprimands a mouse,
Breaks the long circle of a bat's dark winging.

You leave; from your remote and ivory tower
Floats the low voice of some beloved one, calling,
And at the house I hear within the hour
The crash of yet another timber falling.

JOHN MULLEN.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

The Beaux' Stratagem

GEORGE FARQUHAR wrote in the first decade of the eighteenth century. No matter what bigwigs among literary critics may say, he has many qualities in his writing superior to the other Restoration dramatists by virtue of a greater understanding and charity. In reviewing his Beaux' Stratagem, the Players Club gave most of us the experience of seeing a new play and at the same time reminded us that a dramatist of 200 years ago could engage our attention, captivate our interest, and contrive an artificial comedy so neatly as to give it the real sway of illusion.

It is really too bad that the particular conditions under which the Players Club revivals are staged prevent anything more than a brief week's glimpse of their excellent work. For these revivals have a flair and a distinction surpassing even the all-star assemblages of Mr. George Tyler. You feel most keenly a pervading sense of theatrical tradition. The theatre comes to life as theatre, and quite independently of the play itself. It may be due to the simple knowledge that commercialism does not enter in, and that, for the moment, those who have dedicated their life to the theatre are able to bestow upon it a moment of untrammeled devotion.

Of course the story of The Beaux' Stratagem has its creaky moments. There are times when your interest in the fate of the two impoverished gentlemen, who try to rebuild their fortunes through marriage, slackens and almost dies, and the final solution by which Mrs. Sullen rids herself of a disagreeable husband through divorce completely begs the question of the drama. Also the elements of bedroom farce seem like an uncomfortable echo of an A. H. Woods technique in spite of being written 200 years earlier. But taking The Beaux' Stratagem scene by scene, it presents as many and as varied moments of sheer wit and delightful comedy as you could find in half a dozen efforts of our own day.

Much of the delight and charm of the play spring from the extraordinarily competent acting. The Players, of course, can command the best talent available in New York at the moment. But it is surprising and gratifying to see what excellent judgment they show in casting. Possibly they, as actors, are freer from the superstitions of type casting than the average manager. They seem to understand the essential fact of the theatre that a really good actor capable of entering into a part can often create a much more complete illusion than the mediocre actor whose attributes seem to fit the stage directions. You will hear even the most astute of commercial managers discussing the casting of a new play in terms which seem to deny the very essence of the actor's art. Now this principle is not only bad for the theatre as a whole, in that it fails to develop the abilities of actors, but it is actually bad for the particular play which is cast on this principle. With rare exceptions the actor who is merely projecting his own personality, because it happens to fit the written character, is less convincing to the audience than the actor who is entering into a wholly different personality. There are several good reasons for this. Among them self-consciousness is the first. An actor seldom attains real freedom of theatrical expression unless he feels that his stage character is somehow a mask for his personal character. To understand this you have only to take the familiar experience of people who go to a masked ball. The spontaneous gaiety of such an event springs almost entirely from the sense of freedom one gets in being for the moment something other than one's conventional self. Thus Walter Hampden, who is a scholar of the stage, is much at his best when hidden by the mask of Cyrano's nose. So true is this principle that the clown who makes thousands laugh while his own heart is breaking is one of the immortal figures of dramatic literature. Wherefore I am convinced that one reason why so many modern productions lack real glamour is because type casting has gone to such an extreme that we almost never witness the real magic of acting.

The sounder instinct of the actor himself may thus account for much of that sense of real theatre which I tried to describe in the Players Club revivals. No Broadway manager, for example, would ever have cast James Rennie as Marc Antony in last year's production of Julius Caesar—yet his work proved to be one of the outstanding moments of the evening. Nor would the average commercial manager have envisaged Falstaff in the neat and urbane person of Otis Skinner. And so, coming to this year's revival, we find, of all persons, Helen Menken as a distinguished portrayer of a Restoration maiden, replete with style and spontaneity. Nor would Fay Bainter be a manager's first choice for Mrs. Sullen unless George Tyler, who belongs to an older tradition, had exhibited her first in She Stoops to Conquer. Dorothy Stickney, of course, is a surprising young person who has done so many things in the last year that even a manager might have cast her for the landlord's daughter, Cherry. In this part she did astonishingly well except for a plaintive accent which occasionally drawled too slowly. The two clown parts, Boniface the landlord, and Scrub, the inane servant, were handed over to those two inimitable comedians, Raymond Hitchcock and James T. Powers, respectively. What a magnificent sense of proportion and timing Mr. Hitchcock has! And how much fine acting we have missed from him through the low-grade comedies in which he has been featured! Mr. Powers overdid his Scotch comedy in the sense that he disturbed the proportion of certain scenes, but taken only as a solo performance, his was excellent. The most difficult parts in this comedy of course are Aimwell and Archer, the two poverty-stricken gentlemen whose antics give the play its name. Wilfrid Seagram took the first, and Fred Eric the second, and both gave capital performances with just enough bravura and exaggeration and clean-cut style to make their scenes crisp and engaging. Indeed Mr. Seagram was so convincing that, like the benighted manager, one falls into the trap of wondering how good he would be in an everyday modern play. Please understand that this is meant as a tribute and not as a criticism. Lyn Harding was reasonably good as the drunken Mr. Sullen, but he has a slightly soft quality in all of his work which throws a shadow of doubt on his complete versatility as an actor.

To add to the distinction of the occasion, a prologue written by Edgar Lee Masters was read by Walter Hampden in swallowtails, and an epilogue of his own composition was spoken by Mr. David Belasco. The settings and costumes by Jules Guerin were more than adequate without being pretentious, and the general staging by Howard Lindsay was swift and accurate enough in pace to carry the evening almost to a lively conclusion. But even his direction could not overcome the stupid mechanics of the last act.

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COMMUNICATIONS

BEYOND FREEDOM

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—In your editorial of June 6, Beyond Freedom, which like a clarion call sounds forth, stirring even the indifferent to rise up and do battle for the right, there was the omission of a note that surely was not intended. In the first column on page 114 "public opinion" is set forth as though it were in itself truth, since it is said to be "of ultimate importance." According to Abraham Lincoln, public opinion has "a central idea from which minor thoughts radiate"; therefore it is the central idea back of public opinion which is of "ultimate importance," since if that idea is evil or non-existent, either public opinion will be on the side of evil or there will be none at all. Only an enlightened public opinion would be able to "determine the use of military force" or to "modify financial strength." So also, when public opinion is illuminated by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, then and then only, "upon its exercise will depend . . . the ability of virtue to influence the decisions of political authority."

The most alarming feature of the present appalling indifference regarding the daily recurring atrocities in Mexico, is the proof it affords of the lack of public opinion in our own commonwealth. But America was not always thus—a land of indifferentism. The question then is: how can public opinion be re-created? It is one worth examination.

In America where church and state are wholly separated, the development of public opinion upon matters of common interest has necessarily been left to the public press. Until quite recently, numerous journals were still in existence whose raison d'être was teaching people how to think on important political questions. Not only so, but news items were presented in a way to stimulate thought, thus creating a basis upon which public opinion could be founded. Today, as was authoritatively shown in an article published a few years ago in the Atlantic Monthly, such newspapers have entirely disappeared. Only those have survived that were willing to let themselves be enrolled among the forces that served consumptionism. Their chief purpose therefore became, not teaching the people how to think, but how and where to buy. The principles underlying right political thinking in the present situation of affairs in America do not reach the masses at all. This fact implies a new duty laid upon the Catholic press, for in this land of ours no one can hope to escape the lethal effects of modern journalism unless some antidote is at hand powerful enough to act as a corrective.

ELIZABETH S. KITE.

THE PRESS AND MEXICO

Webster Groves, Mo.

TO the Editor:—Many newspapers in this country are applauding the action of the National Press Club in refusing membership to Mussolini. This seems to be a case of the pot calling the kettle black. How can we congratulate ourselves on liberty of the press when all news of the troubles in Mexico is conscientiously concealed from the American public?

CYRIL CLEMENS.

(The Commonweal invites its readers to send in communications expressing individual views on all topics that are of public interest, regardless of whether or not such topics have been previously discussed in its columns.—The Editors.)

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BOOKS

Saints and Symbols

L'Art Chrétien: Son Développement Iconographique des Origines à Nos Jours, par Louis Brehier, Professeur a l'Université de Clermont. Paris: Librarie Renouard.

SYSTEMATIC studies of Christian iconography have always been valuable, in assisting the amateur to understand the representative works of various periods and in helping the artist to make himself understood, by maintaining something of the orderliness of a language in the use of figures and symbols. As studied by the modern scholar iconography becomes still more broadly interesting, making of the long series of Christian art relics a full and vital commentary upon the development of the Christian consciousness.

This is the spirit of M. Brehier's book, but, although he disclaims any attempt to study the element of form, he has chosen for reproduction more than three hundred examples of religious art, covering the long range of eighteen centuries, from frescoes of the catacombs and second-century sarcophagi to works of Georges Desvallières and Maurice Denis. These illustrations are in themselves a graphic history of the development of style, and make of the book perhaps the most satisfactory history of Christian art which may be found within such slender compass.

The Christian religion was, at its outset, hostile generally to any attempt to portray the objects of its worship. This was to be expected, not only because of the Old Testament commandment against graven images, but also as a reaction against pagan idolatry. However, before Christianity had become a highly organized worship, it was a hope, "good tidings" with respect to life after death, a promise of salvation, the symbolic representation of which sought and soon found expression in the decoration of the Christian places of burial. This thin edge of the entering wedge was scarcely perceptible, as symbolic representations, in which the more shadowy hopes of pagandom were given expression, were common upon contemporary tombs, particularly among the followers of the oriental cults so popular in the Roman empire during the early Christian centuries. Indeed this pagan symbolism was not altogether rejected by the early Christian artists, motifs from the myths of Orpheus and of Cupid and Psyche being not uncommon among such well-known and distinctively Christian symbols as the anchor, fish, Good Shepherd, or the group of gazelles feeding upon a flowery meadow which figured paradise and the blessed.

The triumph of the Church under Constantine and his successors resulted in a rapid and comprehensive development of Christian iconography and Christian art. The prejudice against figurative representation did not survive the enthusiastic church building and decorative activities which followed immediately upon the edict of tolerance. Slowly, too, the Cross takes its place as the central symbol of Christianity, first as a triumphal blazon, only later under the influence of christological controversy as the instrument of the Passion.

The rapid development of religious art in the Church was interrupted by the iconoclastic movement of the eighth and ninth centuries, the interesting marks left by which M. Brehier studies with some detail. Of still greater importance is his study of the dual tendency which developed in the art of the Eastern Church from the sixth century. On the one hand we find an official art, preoccupied with theological conceptions which came to be stereotyped in more and more hardened, life-

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less forms, on the other hand there develops a more popular art, of monastic origin, which brooded upon picturesque and pathetic episodes of the Gospel story.

A summary of the encyclopaedic comprehensiveness of the art of the full middle-ages, which stems from this more popular conception of Christian art, or of the tremendous task of organizing this almost universal synthesis of human interest, as given expression in the art of the great Gothic cathedrals, would, even in the briefest form, be impossible in a notice such as this. May it suffice to say that M. Brehier embodies much of the material more fully presented in the great work of Male, upon Religious Art in France during the Middle-Ages, altering somewhat the arrangement, but in the main agreeing with the lines of influence and development presented there.

From the early sixteenth century religious art in Europe has no longer the importance as a social document which it had during the middle-ages. The pages devoted to it are therefore of less interest to the general reader, though one might have wished to read more about the Spanish school of the seventeenth century. However, the author has chosen to leave room for the discussion of the waning interest in and quality of religious art during the later centuries, discussing some contemporary movements for its revivification.

NORMAN TOWAR BOGGS.

Antidotes for Pessimism

The Building of Cultures, by Roland B. Dixon. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $4.00.

IN THIS book a very distinguished professor of anthropology offers the general or lay reader a rapid summary of the best opinion on the whole subject of the origin and growth of human culture. "The culture of any people," he writes, "comprises the sum of all their activities, customs and beliefs." It is that totality of a people's activities which, in the case of the more advanced, we have been accustomed to call their civilization.

Professor Dixon's task has obviously been a most difficult one, for he covers a field of scientific investigation whose immensity and complexity are likely to bewilder any but the most encyclopaedic, persistent and lucid minds. But the forty pages of his last chapter alone give ample demonstration that his mentality and technical equipment are equal to the task. In them he reconstructs, with broad and eloquent strokes, the development of our elaborate modern civilizations from the hypothetical archaic culture of the infancy of the race. With justice and sobriety he rehearses the part played by environment, genius and diffusion, and he concludes with a zealous (if perhaps a rather too sanguine) attempt to forecast the future for America. There emerges from these pages a glowing concept of an increasingly successful struggle on the part of humanity to wring spiritual as well as material values from a neutral or inimical habitat. This concept he ardently sets forth and defends; and it is one which will probably have more appeal to many of us than the tragic hypotheses of Spengler.

The general reader must exercise a considerable amount of patience, however, before he arrives at Professor Dixon's inspirational conclusion—if he is the conscientious sort of person who reads a book straight through or not at all. I am inclined to advise even such a person to jump from the end of the second chapter (on discovery and invention) to the last, The Building of Cultures itself. This may stimulate him sufficiently to follow the close, technical and rather controversial argu-

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ments with which the four long sections on diffusion, trait-complexes and culture parallels are concerned.

The author realizes that the bulk of his book makes tedious reading. Again and again he begs for attention and patience while he meticulously demolishes the theories of his colleagues. He feels constrained to do this, he explains, because he fears that his lay readers may mistake silence on his part for assent. It may be urged, however, that most of his readers are probably not over-familiar with the works of his chief opponents (Drs. Clark Wissler and G. Elliott Smith) and that much of his space might have been more usefully and entertainingly occupied by positive rather than by exasperatingly negative evidence.

Again he declares, "If much that I have said appears to be trite, I would say only in excuse that because a thing is obvious is no reason why it should not be significant, and that it has often been the disregard of the obvious that has led investigators astray." But surely Professor Dixon might have found it unnecessary to point out that "genius may be more or less prolific, ranging from the man who has one invention to his credit to him whose mind seethes with new ideas"; that "the opportunity to develop means of navigation is afforded only by areas adjacent to seas or lakes or which contain navigable rivers"; that "the snow house is obviously an invention possible only in an area where a supply of snow of the requisite consistency was to be had." The book is weighted with dozens of similar ponderosities. The most lay reader in the world may have been safely trusted not to imagine that the snow igloo was invented in Brazil! And if "investigators" are in the habit of disregarding the fact that boats cannot easily float over dry land, the lay reader may be pardoned for indulging in a few complacent chuckles.

ERNEST BRENNECKE, JR.

Lowell Schmaltz, Soft-Head

The Man Who Knew Coolidge, by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. $2.00.

THERE is one terrible thing about this book. There is truth in it. We have all met a thousand Lowell Schmaltz's—and he is the book's hero. But it is worse than that. We have all met in so many greater men a part of Schmaltz. Bankers who rightly impress us because they are giant executives, and are feared by some Europeans as the tyrants of the world, suddenly begin to talk about something other than banking; art, ethics—shall we say—or preferably religion. "I"—they always begin with I—"I have just been thinking out religion for myself, and I have come to the conclusion"—and the voice of Schmaltz goes ringing into platitudes.

Mr. Sinclair Lewis has no tenderness for Schmaltz. Molière had a real human sympathy for Sganarelle; Dickens may have created Pickwick for a mere butt, but on second thought he let him off easily. Shakespeare—it is my personal opinion—introduced Falstaff as one not at all to be loved, as a contrast to chivalry. Yet Falstaff was too much for him. Schmaltz is not too much for Lewis, not, at least, in the same sense. I would contend that it is the soft brain of Schmaltz that makes him intolerable. I have not the least doubt but that in a calamity he might act really as a hero, even bring tears of admiration to your eye, and then afterward make you weep with despair by his tale of that heroism. This terrible gap between Schmaltz and Schmaltz's own idea of Schmaltz is an element of tragedy, but tragedy is not noticed in Mr. Lewis's satire, and need not be.

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But the fact that Schmaltz is not truly wicked, and not the worst type of hypocrite, sets us wondering as to why such a man should be meted out such unmitigated punishment. Savage indignation usually chooses a more considerable subject. Merriment, and there is merriment in this book—is usually over a small man, more willing to be merry. Mr. Lewis is made earnest not by a mere contemplation of soft-headed Schmaltz, but by a sense that Schmaltz is in power. France was not run by Sganarelle, nor England by Pickwick, Schmaltz is writing our books, changing our language, destroying all philosophy, and changing as many churches as he can into church suppers. He has no idea of any variety, or of the existence of anything that is august. In his bungalow he has a couple of chairs made out of an old Spanish altar—and no harm meant.

Mr. Schmaltz thinks, no doubt, that he is a conservative, a solid man like his "friend" Coolidge. As a matter of fact he is a radical, the advocate of a state of affairs devastatingly new. Let us hope that his "new era" never really comes into existence. For helping to stave off its approach let us thank Mr. Lewis. And let Mr. Lewis for once follow Schmaltz's advice and continue "to keep a firm foothold in the public eye."

DANIEL SARGENT.

Evolution and Orthodoxy

A Catholic View of Holism, by Monsignor Kolbe. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.25.

WHEN General Smuts's work on Holism appeared, the editor of The Commonweal did me the honor of placing it in my hands. In the notice which appeared in these columns I pointed out that what the General had done was, without knowing it, to rediscover the Aristotelian and scholastic theory of matter and form. It is, therefore, naturally a gratification to me to find that so distinguished a writer as Monsignor Kolbe, of the University of Capetown, takes an identical view in this book of his.

Monsignor Kolbe has done a great deal more than this, for he shows how evolution itself and the emergent form of it, so fashionable today, are perfectly compatible with Catholic teaching. To him there is no question that Saint Augustine, in his "rationes seminales," and Saint Basil, in his teachings, did in fact set down in embryo what is meant by evolution; he thus ranges himself in this Augustinian controversy on the side taken by Dr. Coakley and by Father McKeough and others. As to emergent evolution, that in reality is a mere registering of fact if we allow, as we must, for a gradual progress in the scale of life. New things did from time to time emerge—the one great question which, as Monsignor Kolbe is careful to point out, is neglected by General Smuts and, it may be added by other emergent evolutionists, is: What caused the emergencies? Evolutionists are now beginning to admit, what philosophers have always pointed out, that evolution, whether called emergent or not, is not and can by no possibility be, self-explanatory. Monsignor Kolbe shows that the Divine Word can cause the gradual progress just spoken of by the method of evolution and, as he says, perhaps even up to the human body. And I entirely agree with him that though we have no evidence for it, it is quite possible that the emergence of living from non-living matter may be proved at any time. Canon de Dorlodot says that he would give a great deal for the proof of this continuity of things. I have met anxious and ignorant folk who imagined that such a discovery would be fatal to religion. Considering that the view was held by all Catholic philosophers, including

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Saint Thomas Aquinas, down to a recent date (for there may have been some who held it when Pasteur placed the controversy on the strongly negative side that it now holds) it is hard to see how that could be.

Monsignor Kolbe also deals in a very interesting manner with the view that the cell is the biological unit. He thinks that the continuous-mass-of-protoplasm view is a better one and more harmonious with Holistic ideas. Here I think one must distinguish. That the ultimate problems of life are to be sought in the cell is still abundantly true, but that the body of the multicellular thing is to be looked upon solely as an edifice of which the cells are the bricks is no longer, I think, the teaching of biology as it was when I was first a student of that science. It is believed that even in single-celled creatures, areas of the cell may be set aside for different purposes and that in the multicellular body this is carried out on a larger scale of the division of responsibilities. But, in any case, the body, whether uni- or multicellular, works as a whole and that brigade-like character has to be explained and certainly cannot be so explained on mere mechanical principles. General Smuts calls the "x" which we are in search of, Holism, the scholastic calls it form and between the two there is very little except a question of terminology.

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